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EDWARD CAIRD

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The career of a man who devotes his life to reflection upon philosophy and religion, whose active work consists in teaching these subjects and in writing about them, is little likely to furnish incidents meet for flamboyant biography. But it may well be a source of profound influence, destined to affect the culture of a people or an age long after events that splash noisily upon the momentary surface have sunk into oblivion. Now Caird constituted an exceptional force, particularly in that native home of English-speaking philosophy and religion, Scotland; as such he merits memorial in these pages. Moreover, we must remember that, although, to his great regret, expressed to me often, he never visited the United States, his spirit has wrought strongly on this continent. Years ago, when I was a young Fellow at Glasgow, I received a letter from an American philosopher which concluded with words that have always stuck in my memory, "We look to Glasgow for light and leading." Here Glasgow happened to be a synonym for the brothers Caird.

The external facts of Edward Caird's life are as follows. He was born in the Clydeside city of Greenock on March 22d, 1835, sixth son of John Caird, head of the firm of Caird & Co., engineers and shipbuilders. Like his distinguished eldest brother, John, who was fifteen years his senior, and afterwards his academic chief at Glasgow, Edward received his early education at the Greenock Grammar School (Academy). Thence he passed to the University of Glasgow at the age of fifteen, and resided as

an undergraduate from 1850-56. In the academic year 1856-57, he matriculated as a student of theology at the University of St. Andrews, but returned to Glasgow in 1858-59, having apparently abandoned his first intention to enter the ministry of the Church of Scotland. As an undergraduate he achieved distinction in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. In April, 1860, he gained the Snell Exhibition, a foundation that has sent a long line of eminent Scotsmen to Oxford,¹ and entered upon residence at Balliol College in the October following. In 1861 he was awarded the Pusey and Ellerton Scholarship for Hebrew, and in 1862 the Jenkyns Exhibition, a coveted distinction; he took a First-Class in Classical Moderations in the same year, and a First-Class in the Final School of *Literae Humaniores* in 1863, when he proceeded to the degree of B.A. He refused to pass to the M.A. degree till the theological tests were abolished (1873). In 1864 he was elected a Fellow of Merton College, and remained here for two years, engaged in the usual work of a college tutor at Oxford. In 1866 he was elected to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Glasgow, whither his brother John had preceded him by four years to the Chair of Divinity. Here he spent the twenty-seven best and most fruitful years of his life. He received the customary two-year appointment to the Gifford Lectureship on Natural Theology² in the University of St. Andrews in 1890. Upon Jowett's death, after a unique career as Master of Balliol, the Fellows were in serious straits regarding a successor. Consequent upon anxious deliberation, wherein, as one has heard, many possibilities were discussed, the office was offered to Caird in the early winter of 1893. In the spring of 1894 he resigned his Glasgow chair, forsaking the wonderful position he had created for himself—an act of deliberate self-sacrifice—and returned to Oxford, where he conducted the most famous Foundation of the University with marked success till ill-health compelled his resignation in 1907, when, to his deep gratification, he was succeeded by his

¹ See W. Innes Addison, *The Snell Exhibitions from the University of Glasgow to Balliol College, Oxford, 1697-1900*. (New York, Macmillan Co., 1901.)

² Cf. Articles by me: "The Gifford Lectureships" (in *The Open Court*, February, 1900); "Philosophy of Religion and the Endowment of Natural Theology" (in *The Monist*, October, 1901).

lifelong friend, and old pupil of Merton days, Dr. J. L. Strachan-Davidson. In 1900 he returned to the scene of his Scottish triumphs as Gifford Lecturer.

As was to be anticipated, more than the ordinary share of academic honors fell to his lot. He received the honorary degree of LL.D. from St. Andrews in 1878; of D.C.L. from Oxford in 1892; of LL.D. from Glasgow in 1894; of Litt.D. from Cambridge in 1898; of D.Lit. from Wales in 1902; and, most appropriately, he was created an honorary Doctor of Philosophy by Kant's University. In 1900, the Royal Society of Edinburgh added his name to its short list of Honorary Fellows. Inevitably, he became one of the original Fellows of the British Academy, and he honored the French Academy by accepting election as a Corresponding Member. Early in 1906 he suffered a paralytic seizure, which proved the first indication of the break-down that ended in death on November 1st, 1908. He lies buried at Oxford beside some whom he had "loved long since, and lost awhile."

Plainly enough, this bare record divides the career into several parts. We have, *first*, the period of formation, and early experience as a teacher at Oxford; *second*, the epoch—this is the only name for it—of the Glasgow professorship; *third*, the headship of Balliol; *fourth*, the work and the man.

I

It is difficult, if not impossible, for one writing at this late day to realize the atmosphere of Glasgow, St. Andrews, and Oxford in the middle of the 19th century. The "reforms" wrought upon the Scottish and English universities since were still in the future, and many things differed vastly from their present state. So far as the Scottish universities were concerned, and with special reference to his eventual eminence in philosophy, it is probably correct to adduce a familiar maxim in description of Caird's experience: "Every man who rises above the common level has received two educations: the first from his teachers; the second, more personal and important, from himself." At Glasgow, William Ramsay, professor of Latin, was a remarkable personality, a capital teacher, and a scholar of parts; Lushington, professor of

Greek, Tennyson's brother-in-law, combined profound learning with much grace, but could not teach beginners; Weir, professor of Hebrew, ranked with the best in his subject. From them Caird undoubtedly secured the groundwork of accurate scholarship that stood him in such good stead later at the home of classical learning. But the philosophical professors, as he informed me himself, helped him little. "Logic Bob," as Buchanan, professor of Logic and Rhetoric was dubbed, excelled in the art of teaching, possessed a caustic wit, but lacked speculative insight. Fleming, in Moral Philosophy, Caird's immediate predecessor, happened to be more or less a respectable nonentity. With reference to the theological professors, Luke, the ablest Glasgow man then at Oxford, wrote to John Nichol, afterwards Caird's colleague in English Literature, "Caird is at St. Andrews—enjoying it—delivered from St. Rollox³ and the Glasgow Divinity Hall" (1857). The strong likelihood is that Caird migrated to St. Andrews in the expectation that he would get something more to the point from Tulloch, who had entered upon his professorship in 1854; but Tulloch, despite his eminence as an orator, as a literary man, and as a liberalizing influence in the Church, could hardly be accounted a philosopher. Whether Caird acquired aught from Ferrier, the celebrated professor of Moral Philosophy, I do not know; as a theological student, he would not be required to hear him.

On the other hand, at Glasgow, as at Oxford after, Caird fell among a group of exceptionally gifted students, some of them devoted to the new prophet, Carlyle. From association with them he obtained materials for the "second education—from himself." Of this scintillating company were John Nichol; John Service, thirty years later the most remarkable man in the ministry of the Church of Scotland, and author of what has been called the best volume of sermons ever written;⁴ Ross, the historian of early Scottish literature; Luke, the brilliant classic, snatched by drowning ere his prime; A. Mackennal, afterwards a light in the English Free Churches; Donald Macleod, editor of *Good Words*,

³ The slum district of the city, in which the university buildings were situated then.

⁴ *Salvation Here and Hereafter.* (Macmillan & Co., 1877.)

and Moderator of the Church of Scotland; Henry Crosskey, the geologist, and Unitarian leader at Birmingham; Flint, most learned of Scottish theologians; D. B. Monro, who became one of Oxford's bright particular stars, Provost of Oriel; Jack, once editor of the *Glasgow Herald*, still professor of Mathematics at Glasgow; and Alexander Smith, the poet, whom Herbert Spencer ranked "as the greatest poet since Shakespeare."⁵ These ardent youths stimulated one another, lived a vivid intellectual life irrespective of their teachers, enjoyed the fostering friendship and hospitality of Nichol's father, J. P. Nichol, the eloquent professor of Astronomy, partisan of Kossuth and Mazzini, fervid sympathizer with the anti-slavery party in the United States, protagonist of free-trade. To alter a phrase of Bentham's,⁶ they were talking nonsense, and accumulating wisdom. Accordingly, Caird arrived at Oxford with a capital linguistic outfit, with a perspective incomparably wider than that of the English Public School boy, with a deep tincture of seriousness, inbred by the national Calvinism—in short, revolving the deep things.

At Balliol, too, Jowett certainly excepted, and possibly Riddell,⁷ he appears to have gathered much more from his associates, especially several who were his seniors in academic standing, than from the regular staff. John Nichol had preceded Caird in the Snell by four years, and the Society—remarkable for its *personnel*—founded by him offered the younger man an environment even more memorable and transforming than that of Glasgow. "By some members" of the 'Old Mortality,' Caird wrote long after, "its meetings are remembered as the very salt of their university life. The free discussion of everything in heaven or earth, the fresh enjoyment of intellectual sympathy, the fearless intercommunion of spirits, the youthful faith that the key of truth lies very near to our hands, give a unique zest and charm to those meetings of students with students, before the inevitable parting of the ways of manhood has come."⁸ "Its being's end and

⁵ David Duncan, *Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer*, I, 87 (American edition).

⁶ Cf. *Deontology*, I, 39.

⁷ Cf. *Dictionary of National Biography*, XLVIII, 270-271.

⁸ William Knight, *Memoir of John Nichol*, p. 154.

aim," wrote another member, "was philosophical discussion, and certainly its mental atmosphere was very keen." The same writer also recorded, "Kant and Hegel were new names to most of us, and we got our first introduction to them from Nichol. His strong Scotch logic was of no ordinary force, at a time when Mansel's Bampton Lectures waged the war of orthodoxy with the sword of Sir W. Hamilton."⁹ Small wonder that the Society left its mark, for of its number were T. H. Green, Swinburne, A. V. Dicey, T. E. Holland, Luke, Birkbeck Hill, James Bryce, Pater, and Bywater, with others destined to scarce less distinction. A new wave was gathering, to sweep the place left vacant by the receding tide of the Oxford Movement, and to cast up something less dispiriting than Mansel's agnosticism. To this Caird himself was to contribute more effectually than anyone save T. H. Green and, indirectly, Jowett.

Of the two years at Merton little need be said. Caird undertook the philosophical instruction for "Greats," and proved a recruit of distinctive capacity. His knowledge and sweep, humor and kindness, were in evidence already, although his extraordinary power and luminousness as a lecturer had not developed fully as yet. "He nearly always could, and (which is quite a different thing in pastors and masters) always, when he could, would tell you what you wanted to know, and not merely what he wanted to say. And I still have (or ought to have) in a letter which he wrote to me, on an occasion to me sufficiently disgusting, one of the kindest and wisest documents of marked wisdom and kindness that I ever received myself or read as having been addressed to others."¹⁰

II

It may be taken as almost axiomatic that remarkable men seldom achieve full success unless supported by congenial, if not completely amicable, circumstances. The power of the man and the power of the moment must agree, as Matthew Arnold phrased it. Sufficient water has run beneath the bridges since 1866 to

⁹ William Knight, *Memoir of John Nichol*, pp. 148-149.

¹⁰ Professor Saintsbury, "Caird at Merton" (*Glasgow Herald*, November 6th, 1908).

make it apparent to the present observer that Caird entered upon his Glasgow Chair at a favorable period. The Alexandria of Scotland stood on the verge of her striking expansion in wealth and population, paralleled only in the young cities of the New World. The Act of 1859 had ended some abuses in the universities, and, the battle lost and won, men could adjust themselves calmly to the fresh order. Educational agitation rent the air, and the epoch-making bill of 1870 lay just ahead, destined to rouse keen self-consciousness among the people as a whole. The religious world, echoes of German "rationalism" in its ears, had begun to doubt the old ways. The democratic movement that kept the Liberals in power for nigh two generations maintained its restless march. The idea of civic responsibility, fated to great illustration in Glasgow, was on the point of asserting itself. On all these issues Caird stood with face turned immovable, and full of hope, to the progressive things. Moreover, when her history comes to be set down, even with those deductions that will be made inevitably when we actors in her drama are gone, it will surely record that the University of Glasgow had arrived on the threshold of her golden age. During the years from 1860 to 1890, she commanded the services of a galaxy of talent unexampled before, little likely to be duplicated for long. Experts, running critical eye along the list, can hardly fail to note names of the highest eminence in their respective fields. The lustre cast upon philosophy by Caird and his brother was much enhanced in other departments by such men as Nichol and A. C. Bradley in English literature; Lushington, Jebb, and Murray, now Bywater's successor at Oxford, in Greek; Veitch, the learned mediaevalist, in logic; Lord Kelvin in physics; Grant in astronomy; Macquorne Rankine in engineering; Elgar in naval architecture; I. Balfour (now professor at Edinburgh) and Bower in botany; Allen Thomson and Cleland in anatomy; McKendrick in physiology; Leishman, Macewen, and Thomas Barr in surgery; Dickson, of prodigious learning, Story, prince of ecclesiastics, and Robertson, a kind of Old Testament Zahn, in theology; W. G. Miller in jurisprudence; Max Müller, and W. Wallace, Hegel's expositor, in natural theology—a truly remarkable aggregation. Nor were the younger men who assisted unworthy their chiefs.

At least a score of them have won their own spurs since; it may not be invidious to mention Sir William Ramsay, the chemist, Sonnenschein, the Plautine scholar, and Smart, the economist.

The university proved a veritable seething-pot of ideas, the Witenagemot Society being our counterpart to the Old Mortality of Caird's student days at Oxford. No one would deny that Caird played the rôle of presiding genius, and that the impassioned pulpit eloquence of his brother, the Principal, carried the doctrine everywhere. I entered the Moral Philosophy class in 1879, the period of the very crest of the wave, to be swept off like the rest. In eighteen months I found myself a changed being; too much so, for the terrific competitive strain characteristic of the Scottish universities, plus the stress of spiritual readjustment, broke my physical strength, and I had to seek restoration in travel. On return, nearly two years later, the tide stayed still at the full,¹¹ and gave few signs of recession for a septennate. When Caird returned to Balliol, outsiders, among whom I recall specially A. B. Bruce, the intrepid theologian, held that the ebb had set in. Even so, the flood left a mark that will not become part of a historical past for another generation. The effervescence could not but produce results, and Caird's pupils are everywhere now, his look, gesture, and utterance, above all, his character, speaking to and through them. They fill twenty-five chairs, a majority in philosophy and theology, in the Universities of St. Andrews, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Wales, London, and in the Free Church Colleges at Aberdeen and Glasgow. Naturally, the English universities were affected otherwise. Caird's Oxford influence has passed mainly, I judge, into the Public Services and politics, though some Tutors, and several Professors, have not escaped it. At Cambridge, two or three prominent philosophers, though never his pupils, feel the touch of his magic. His intellectual children guard the outposts of the Empire. Seven chairs in Canada, five in India, two at least in Australia, one at the Cape, one at least in New Zealand, are in their occupancy; while three, possibly more, labor in the United States, where the careers of Morris, Howison, Harris, Dewey,

¹¹ Many would agree, I think, that high tide was marked by the publication of *Essays in Philosophical Criticism* (1883); see bibliography, p. 137.

Royce, and others, testify to his persuasiveness. Forty-four professorships, at a minimum, represent an incalculable leverage, one exercised on a larger scale and with a bigger audience in the Scottish churches, whose outlook he and his brother may be said to have transformed in considerable part. Nor is this all. The great world of practical effort bears his sign. To give a brief list, the Archbishop of York, the Secretary of the Scottish Education Department, the Minister of Education in Egypt, the Master of the Canadian Mint, the Superintendent-General of Education at the Cape, the Secretary of the Carnegie Trust for the Scottish Universities, all heard him at Glasgow, while the Minister of War is a distinguished Edinburgh coworker. Such things are not accomplished down the averages of time. They cannot fail to create curiosity about the man among those who never met him face to face. For the upshot of the matter is that, like Hume a century sooner, though in circumstances more favorable by far to personal leadership, he placed Scotland once more in the main stream of modern thought.

III

When we come to the period of the Balliol Mastership, I must state at the outset that intimate knowledge fails me. For, while I lived in Glasgow for twenty-four of the twenty-seven years covered by Caird's professorship, I crossed the ocean two years after his migration to Oxford, and thus lost the personal familiarity with events possible to a fellow-citizen and, in a lesser degree, to a resident of the same country. Accordingly, I am unable to offer more than impressions formed at Oxford on three visits during Caird's *régime*, two of them, thanks to his hospitality, at Balliol Lodge. Of course, public reports and private letters lie before me, as well as notes of conversations with several Oxonians, Balliol and anti-Balliol.

By way of introduction, it may be as well to face a disagreeable business and have done with it. The single serious check, if such it can be called, in Caird's external career was his failure to secure election to the Whyte's Professorship of Moral Philosophy after Wallace's lamentable death by accident, in 1897. And some things about the difficulties and problems of the Mastership,

possibly best left unsaid, are explained when one remembers that the professorial incident may be laid in part to College jealousies and faction, probably the fruit of long tradition, in part to politics, in great part to *odium theologicum*. The simple facts are: that Caird submitted his name to the electors—itself a sufficiently superfluous requirement—in response to a memorial signed with practical unanimity by Oxford teachers of philosophy, and by eminent representatives of the subject elsewhere; that British expert opinion elected him overwhelmingly; and that the non-expert Board thought otherwise. Those who are able to read between the lines can supply the perspective for themselves.¹²

It is not possible to grasp the conditions that confronted Caird without some reference to what had preceded. Balliol's golden age coincided with the reign of Jowett. As details are out of the question in the space at disposal, it may be said bluntly that the eminence of the College pivoted upon two men—Thomas Hill Green and Jowett himself. For Caird personally, I am inclined to believe that, on the whole, the former proved more important. The Caird epoch at Glasgow found contemporary parallel at Oxford in a manner quite similar, *mutatis mutandis* for striking differences between Scots and English circumstances.¹³ A philosophical renaissance swept the university, wielding potent influence, not merely in scholarship, but also in social and political life. Green, who was Caird's junior by one year, had come up to Balliol five years sooner, thanks to Rugby training. He thus began his transforming activity as a teacher while his friend was still an undergraduate. His predecessor, W. L. Newman, author of the monumental edition of Aristotle's *Politics*, ranked, in Green's estimate, "the best lecturer he had ever heard," so that

¹² This delicate situation has been discussed with an admirable combination of tact and firmness by Prof. J. H. Muirhead, of Birmingham, in "The Oxford Chairs of Philosophy," in the *Contemporary Review*, LXXIV, 724 f. (1898). This article contains much information that cannot fail to interest the cisatlantic academic world; I suggest, however, that it would hardly be wise to proceed to thank God that we are not even as this publican! For there is an exceedingly strong tradition in Oxford against the appointment of the 'Head of a House' to a professorship, although a professor who is elected 'Head of a House' is under no obligation to resign his chair.

¹³ Cf. my article "Some Lights on the British Idealistic Movement," in the *American Journal of Theology*, January, 1901.

the new-comer felt stimulated to do his utmost from the outset. Disappointed of Ferrier's chair at St. Andrews, by the time Caird returned to Glasgow, Green had settled down to Oxford life, fortified by valuable experience as a member of the Schools Inquiry Commission (1864).¹⁴ An exceptional personality, of potent moral force, he was fortunate in exceptional pupils and associates.¹⁵ To name a few out of many. William Wallace matriculated at Balliol in 1864 and, after a distinguished course, remained in Oxford as a Fellow of Merton.¹⁶ A little later F. H. Bradley, who also became a Fellow of Merton, and R. L. Nettleship,¹⁷ who was to be Green's colleague from 1869, entered. Bernard Bosanquet, who was elected a Lecturer of University College in 1871, followed immediately, to be succeeded by another remarkable pupil in the person of Arnold Toynbee;¹⁸ about the same period, Andrew Cecil Bradley, who became Green's colleague in 1874, joined the College. Thanks to this wealth of talent, the philosophical movement assumed large proportions, not without opposition, as may be supposed, *teste* Green's failure to receive election to the Whyte's Professorship, in 1874, and Nettleship's, to the Waynflete Professorship of Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy, in 1889. Meanwhile, as concerned the relation of the College to the ampler world of the University, of society, politics, and empire, Jowett was engineering prodigious success, in short, was "the mainspring of its activities." Thanks to his knowledge of human nature, and shrewd wisdom not common in the children of light, "Balliol had become the nursery of Bishops, Viceroys, and Cabinet Ministers, an Eton among colleges, and almost a university in itself. The Master's Lodge . . . was the scene of week-end parties, where European secrets were discussed and Cabinet affairs settled. Its success had its dangers, for the

¹⁴ Cf. Memoir by R. L. Nettleship, in Works of Thomas Hill Green, vol. III (1888). A remarkable piece of biography "from the inside out."

¹⁵ Cf. E. Abbott and L. Campbell, Life and Letters of Benjamin Jowett, *passim*.

¹⁶ Cf. Biography (by Caird), in W. Wallace, Lectures and Essays on Natural Theology and Ethics (1898).

¹⁷ Cf. Biographical Sketch, A. C. Bradley and G. R. Benson, in The Philosophical Lectures and Remains of R. L. Nettleship, 2 vols. (1907).

¹⁸ Cf. Memoir (by Jowett), in Arnold Toynbee, Lectures on the Industrial Revolution in England (Rivingtons, 1884).

Jowett *régime* was very worldly." So far as I am able to form impressions, three things had happened when Caird succeeded. First, the Green movement, its founder dead twelve years, tended distinctly to wane.¹⁹ Second, Jowett's policy of "colonizing" other colleges with Balliol men had eventuated in several formidable rivals. Third (this I mention with reserve), in some quarters Balliol had developed incipient consciousness of her utilitarian attitude towards success in the "great world." In addition, one must allow for perspective induced in the public mind by the passage of time. The men who stand to the credit of the Jowett administration have reached ages of from thirty-six to sixty now, have taken their permanent places on the ladder of life—some count as personages. On the contrary, the products of Caird's incumbency, at the ages of from twenty-five to thirty-five, still face towards their main activities. Allow twenty years to elapse, and the comparison will run fairer.

There can be no doubt that, when Jowett died, all felt the unique nature of the gap. A successor who could or would follow in his very steps did not exist. Accordingly, Caird's election was accompanied by much shaking of heads in England and Scotland alike. I know many who believed then that he would live to regret the change, for the Oxford of the nineties had travelled a long road from the Oxford of the sixties. But *le vrai mérite ne dépend point du temps ni de la mode*. Caird remained his old self, and won success, thanks in large part to the vivid contrast between him and his predecessor. Balliol and, in a lesser degree, the University, recognized that they had to reckon with a force of a new order. Further, in the first place, the younger teachers of philosophy were ready to welcome him—his accession lent fresh hope, for it added a distinguished personality to the staff at a time when outstanding figures lacked. In the second place, Balliol stood ready to discover his worth. And from the outset he devoted himself to the College. From beginning to end of his Headship, he mastered little details, and conducted trivial

¹⁹ This decline received striking emphasis at the time of Caird's death from the jaunty nonchalance evidently deemed the proper attitude towards the event by a London weekly. One may hazard the remark, it is well for the Mother Land that she produces Scottish philosophers sometimes. Otherwise cockney journalists might delude her into the belief that the sound of Bow Bells coincides with the music of the spheres.

pieces of business which, in the eyes of an outsider at least, seemed sometimes too wasteful of time so valuable. Not only this; he took the trouble to place himself in close touch with the course followed by undergraduates, even to the extent of careful study of the prescribed texts, and familiarized himself with the examination tests by undertaking the duties—no light matter for one of his years—of a Public Examiner in the Final Schools. He showed distinct ability to adapt himself to the unaccustomed position with its more unaccustomed calls. As a result, Balliol preserved her reputation intact, and her faithful staff, like her students, rallied to him, full of confidence. So far as I am able to judge, he did not essay a prominent part in the workaday business of the university, although I have heard it said frankly, and with evident sincerity, by men of experience outside Balliol circles, that he was the most weighty personality in Oxford. He labored for Somerville College, and for the education of women generally. His power within Balliol rooted in his character; within the University, in his outstanding position as a representative of his subject. With regard to the latter, the University had good reason for its estimate. In the United States, at all events, Oxford at once moved to a higher plane by the mere fact of his presence. Unquestionably, he made common cause with a party that counts numerous enemies, and identified himself with unpopular causes open to easy ridicule—degrees for women, female suffrage, radicalism in social, political, and theological controversies. Moreover, he advocated all with a serene simplicity devoid of anything like calculated worldly wisdom, so that, likely enough, his practical interferences were not always well timed. I understand that his activity at the time of the South African War was particularly resented. So, summing everything, “his work was with Balliol, and in a secondary sense with the teaching of philosophy in Oxford. Under his rule the first did not lose prestige, and the second most assuredly developed.” Thus, if we reckon fairly with what had preceded, and realize the consequent difficulty, complexity, ay, hopelessness, as it seemed to some, of the situation to be met, we must grant that his achievement left his lustre undimmed. His domination at Glasgow did not, simply because it could not, repeat itself at Oxford. Nevertheless, he main-

tained Balliol's leadership in a crisis that might readily have proved fatal, and lent additional fame to the university as a home of philosophical inquiry. It was no common feat for a student by nature and nurture to effect so much. And the outcome ran favorable, because motivated, not merely by a rare intellect, but by a *humane* being, whose forgetfulness of self, sacrificial devotion to truth, persistent energy, and incapacity for anything petty or mean, could not but win upon others. Principal Fairbairn, who saw much of the Master during these years, summarizes the case delicately, and reveals the basal fact, when he avers, "I never met Caird without feeling humiliated and reproved. Under him Balliol acquired a new reputation: it was less a home of brilliant scholars than of men who had the sincerity of large convictions and genuine insight." Caird's magnificent integrity touched his Headship to fine issues, whereof Balliol and the Empire will yet learn in years to come. Briefly, the magnitude of the man developed a new magnitude in the office, no matter how greatly it had been filled in the immediate past. Ever and anon in his *Lay Sermons* he lays bare, all unconsciously, the secret of his Oxford success—a success, not of things that command attention by loud appeal to conventional judgments, but of transforming thrust into the recesses of the human spirit. "We should endeavor to view our life and our relations to others in the light in which we are revealed to ourselves in our clearest and best moments. . . . All men have such moments of awakened consciousness or conscience, . . . moments in which it seems a simple and plain thing to succeed, and almost an impossibility to fail in living the better life."²⁰ His feet, lighted by this lamp, stood firm and sure, and he enjoyed that greatest of privileges, power to show others the more excellent way, wherein they might walk to their lives' end. This, as I saw and see it, lent amplitude and truest success to the Oxford career.

IV

In order to render this article, so imperfect otherwise, a less unworthy memorial of Caird, I append a list of his publications known to me. Although it may lack a few reviews, contributed

²⁰ Pages 35–36.

anonymously to the *Glasgow Herald*, for example, and episodal writings, of local interest more or less, pertaining to the Balliol years, it suffices to show the curve of his activity, and to illustrate his central interests. In conversation once he said to me, with characteristic simplicity, "I had done nothing when I was appointed to the Glasgow chair; it was much easier to obtain a professorship then than it is now." Nevertheless, the two *North British Review* articles indicate that, at the age of thirty-two, his standpoint had already gone far towards formation. For the rest, the list reveals that his productive life divides itself into three periods. We have, first, the time of preliminary work, including the earlier form of the great book on Kant, the *Britannica* article on "Cartesianism," itself a notable performance, and the illuminating critique of Rousseau. The years of most continuous and important production follow (1879-93), with a score of serial publications, and four books, among them the two masterpieces—the masterpiece in large, *The Critical Philosophy of Immanuel Kant*, and *Hegel*, the "little masterpiece." Finally we have what may be termed the theological (in the sense of philosophy of religion) period, with the two series of Gifford Lectures, the *Lay Sermons*, and some half-dozen articles whose theological titles arrest the eye. It may be remarked that, as his Scottish pupils know very well, the Gifford Lectures belong really to the time of the Glasgow professorship, and that *The Theory of Ethics*, announced (in 1890) for the 'Library of Philosophy,' edited by Professor Muirhead, was never written, the urgency of Oxford duties interposing—a matter for permanent regret. Later still, bodily weakness frustrated his intention to lecture on the philosophy of religion from Augustine to the present day. He has left no manuscripts that could be published.

Thanks to the difficulties that beset intimate knowledge of our fellow-men, we rest satisfied for the most part with synoptic views, often of a rather external kind. This tendency leads by insensible steps to labels and, finally, the static label appropriates the place of the dynamic personality. Philosophers, especially if they command attention from the man in the street, suffer more than their fair share of ills from this otiose method, and Caird fell a ready victim to its apt spell. I remember very well when one

morning, now thirty years ago, I stood at the door of Jebb's class-room, a raw Freshman, a mate confided to me that Caird was a transcendentalist. I did not know what this strange animal might be; but, forthwith, Caird occupied a decent, orderly corner in my jumbled intellectual rag-bag. Later on, I discovered that older and more authoritative folk baptized him a Hegelian, and the *affiche* serves handily with many even yet. Still this is no more than a lazy evasion of a question fraught with several difficulties. Like Green and Wallace, the two contemporaries who were his compeers and coworkers, Caird held that Plato and Hegel must be accounted the thinkers of the past who had sensed the truth most surely. They approached the problem in the right spirit, and along the strait path that led past every blind alley. But, attempt to range him with Hegel's pupils and colleagues, in the attractive rows of Right, Left, or Centre, and you find at once that he eludes your complacent attentions. The national temper and traditions of the Scot vary so fundamentally from those of the Swabian, the philosophical situation in Britain during the rule of Gladstone was so different from the speculative excitement in the Prussia of Stein and Hardenberg, that simple reproduction of the one spirit by the other is an idea too naïve for serious consideration.²¹ Further, Caird has indicated his own attitude with no uncertain sound. "To us, at this distance of time, Hegel, at the highest, can be only the last great philosopher who deserves to be placed on the same level with Plato and Aristotle in ancient, and with Spinoza and Kant in modern times, and who, like them, has given an 'epoch-making' contribution to the development of the philosophic, or, taking the word in the highest sense, the idealistic, interpretation of the world. . . . The only important question now is, not whether we are disciples of Hegel,—the days of discipleship are past,—but whether we recognize the existence of a living development of philosophy, and especially of that spiritual or idealistic view of things in which philosophy culminates." ²²

²¹ The same thing holds always. To take a contemporary case: I find my advanced students of philosophy of religion puzzled constantly by the strong protestant note sounded so frequently in the works of German writers, Pfleiderer and Harnack, for example. We do not need to strike it—and thereby hangs a most important tale.

²² Hegel, pp. 223, 224.

Appreciation of a thinker's philosophy demands some knowledge of his life-history. For, after all, consecutive reflection constitutes an effort to dispel problems, and these originate amid definite conditions as seized and presented by a vital personality. The Scotland of Caird's youth had not emancipated herself from the bonds of the eighteenth century; theology formed her main intellectual interest, and here she was still threshing the old straw—not hers, but presented to her—of the Westminster Confession. In 1831, John M'Leod Campbell had been deposed from the ministry of the National Church, because he had maintained a view of the atonement traversing the doctrines of 'reprobation' and 'election.' For the next twenty-five years ecclesiastical controversy swept the land, and the evangelical party, which founded the Free Church (1843), won immense political *éclat*, thus concentrating attention upon practical affairs and postponing discussion of fundamental problems. The works of Burns and Scott, popular though they were, failed to transform, indeed they hardly touched, convictions on deep things of the spirit. So far as mental activity went, headquarters were at the University of Edinburgh, then midmost its golden age. Hamilton, Christopher North, Aytoun, Forbes, Syme, Christison, Simpson, Gregory, and Bennett maintained the reputation of the capital as the "modern Athens." Yet, even at this, the influence must be characterized as literary rather than speculative in the higher sense. Eminently cultivated, pleasing, respectable, or what you will, it was nevertheless a backwater in the broad current of modern thought. First principles were not being subjected to critical examination. Strange as it may seem in these days of rapid international intercourse, even Kant amounted to little more than a vagrom rumor two generations after *The Critique of Pure Reason!* What Caird records of his brother, the Principal, held true of the atmosphere he himself encountered at the University of Glasgow. "He had been brought up in a circle into which any idea of scepticism as to the doctrines of the Christian faith had hardly entered; and his philosophical studies, which were at that time mainly in Reid and Stewart, while they exercised his powers, were not such as to affect his intellectual or moral life very deeply."²³ The date of this refer-

²³ The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity, I, xiv.

ence is 1840-45. Caird went up a decade later, and even a decade may count for righteousness. What was the difference? In the spring of 1880, during a long tramp with Caird through the country round Glasgow, he stopped suddenly, faced round to me, and asked, "What are you young men thinking about, who is influencing you?" I replied instantly, "Darwin, and the whole question of evolution." Then, without giving him time to strike in, I inquired, "What were you and your comrades thinking about thirty years ago, who was influencing you?" He answered, as rapidly, "Carlyle!" If we recall what Carlyle thought of his Edinburgh professors—"hide-bound pedants," was the barbed phrase—we have the key to the beginning of things with Caird. Coleridge's Teutonic obligations had been noised abroad by Ferrier as early as 1840,²⁴ by the fifties, students at least knew something about the sources of Carlyle's inspiration. So quite naturally Carlyle led to Goethe and Fichte, whence it was but a step to Kant and the whole idealistic movement. Once this became accessible to Caird and his generation, longing as they were for deliverance from the polite ineffectualities that occupied the "seats of the mighty," it sounded in their ears like a trumpet-call, and rallied to a new life. Here, I think, we must detect the secret of the profound influence wielded by the British idealistic masters. Not only were they strong men by grace of nature, but they had appropriated a veritable gospel, and they preached it as if inspired. But, thanks to their national circumstances, it became a new thing in their hands. Hume and Rousseau did not move them as Kant had been moved; they were not required to unify and deliver a people, like Fichte; the progress of science had set Schelling's *Naturphilosophie* beyond the bounds of practical politics; a lifetime of revolutionary riot, such as caused Hegel to long for peace, formed no part of their portion. Above all, the inbred puritan strain turned their thoughts to ethics and religion,

²⁴ Cf. Blackwood's Magazine, March, 1840. It should be noted that Coleridge exerted much directer influence upon philosophy in this country than in Britain; witness James Marsh, Hickok, Tappan, Shedd, Bushnell, and Bascom, to name no others. Some American scholar ought to elucidate this movement thoroughly. Perhaps it may not be too presumptuous in a foreigner to say that, after Edwards, Marsh and Tappan are the most original minds in philosophy that the United States has produced so far.

interests never very far off even in their most technical excursions; while the social structure of England directed their appeal to the whole body of the middle and upper classes rather than to neophytes of *Wissenschaft*. *Nullum simile quatuor pedibus currit*.

When Caird came to his own, the philosophical outlook in Britain could not be called promising. Intuitionism, under Hamilton, sensationalism, under the Mills, seemed to have accomplished their best—or worst. Some raw rationalism, connected with ‘advanced’ political notions, harbored here and there. Spencer was just afoot, with his cosmic extension of Hume. Darwin had revealed himself, while Huxley and Tyndall were about to deliver their onslaught upon the scientific infelicities of dogmatism. It looked as if a dull, drab view of life might submerge everything, and the sole recourse for safety appeared to be pious iteration of outworn formulae. Carlyle had prophesied against it all. “On the one side has been dreary cant, with a *reminiscence* of things holy and divine; on the other side, acrid candor, with a *prophecy* of things brutal, and infernal.” But he had not attempted anything in the nature of systematic demonstration. “Though he owes much to the later German philosophy, especially to Fichte’s popular works, he seems to have cared only about the results, and nothing at all about the processes. Metaphysical theories in general . . . he regards as absurd attempts to measure the immensurable, or weigh with earthly scales . . . infinite reality.”²⁵ Caird joined the lists at this juncture, and showed that a thoroughgoing analysis of experience enables one to transcend the partial views of reactionary intuitionism and of militant sensationalism—to prove, in short, that the cosmos incarnates a spirit which “does all things well.” He thus became a prominent exponent of the genetic view of the universe interpreted in terms of idealism. While this is not the occasion to expound his philosophy, it is well to note that it operated in three directions. First, it resulted in a new study of philosophy as *Wissenschaft*. Second, it passed over into the world of practice, deflecting the old Liberalism of *laissez-faire*, and transforming the outlook upon moral, social, and even political problems. Third, it evoked a fresh interest in systematic study of religion. A word is proper here with respect to the last.

²⁵ E. Caird, *Essays*, I, 248.

It must be said that, so far, Caird's teaching has not resulted in any thorough-going reconstruction of religious thought, framework with facts. But it may be affirmed that the traditional ideas upon which Scotland, and England in another fashion, had fed for some generations, have undergone deliquescence. Men think no longer in the consecrated categories. Higher criticism, like scholarship in general, has lost many of its terrors. At the same time, the situation diverges widely from that regnant, say, in Germany. All things considered, theologians attach themselves, not to philosophical movements, with their transitive principles, but to the confessional churches, State and Free, with their practical needs. Accordingly, without conscious evasion, a mediating tendency has held captivity captive for the most part. In other words, while ready to accept all the weapons proffered by idealism for discomfiture of materialism, sensationalism, agnosticism, and naturalism, few theologians have evinced ready disposition to go the whole way with the purview implied in the system. So, I think, we must view Caird's achievement—not in his own person assuredly, but in those whom he led—as that of a *Bahnbrecher* rather than the founder of a 'new' theology. Criticism in detail, panoplied by history, anthropology, and the like, must still effect much ere the old country will be ready to accept the principles of the idealistic synthesis so completely as to use them in construction of a modern edifice from the foundation up. Perhaps large social displacements may have to supervene; for it has even been alleged that high churchmen have "carried off the honey from the Hegelian hive." Truth to tell, whenever it has been possible to snatch at means of compromise, this method has found nimble supporters, tingling with alacrity. As Caird said himself of his brother's attitude, there must be an immense transformation of the Creed of Christendom before the hut of the fisherman can be transformed into the altar of the great Temple of Humanity.²⁶ What shall we say of this transformation? "We might call it, in Carlyle's own language, a Christianity divested of almost all its clothing; a Christianity without supernaturalism, without dogmas, and without church, reduced to the belief that the universe is in its deepest meaning spiritual, and that therefore, as he expresses it,

²⁶ Cf. *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, I, lxxvii.

'the true Shekinah is man'; a belief, in other words, that in the moral life of man we have the clearest revelation or symbol of that which the divine Spirit is."²⁷ Nevertheless, Caird's enormous service lay in showing that, no matter how far we *must* go with modern science and scholarship, the last word lies with the spirit of man, not with the play of spectral atoms or the heedless crash of 'causal' history. It was an invaluable work, done with superlative skill, and with a weight of high seriousness that carried it far further than the circumstances might have permitted in other hands. We may characterize it as the first, and therefore most difficult, chapter in an entirely new book, so far as English-speaking folk are concerned. Caird wrote *himself* into it, when a different personality might easily have made lamentable shipwreck.

And this leads me to say, in conclusion, that the man was made for the mission. Needless to record, the subtle force of any personality, especially of a great personality, escapes every verbal statement. It must therefore suffice to relate that Caird owned in altogether remarkable degree one of the main characteristics of genius. He was compelling, in the sense that he could transplant himself, and this without apparent effort. He passed over to others, making his ideals theirs, reorienting their very being so that, having once felt the magic of his power, they became as men transfigured. Undoubtedly, many factors combined to this end. Caird's possession of and by a message lent him incalculable representative and reproductive capacity. He impressed, because he stood for an entire universe of things unseen and eternal. His being thus underwent enlargement by its own loss of self.

The historic personage

Put by, leaves prominent the impulse of his age;
Truth sets aside speech, act, time, place, indeed, but brings
Nakedly forward now the principle of things
Highest and least.

Nichol once said to me, "Caird's great limitation is that he has a gospel." On the contrary, to those of us who were younger, this proved the transitive secret of his winsomeness.

²⁷ E. Caird, *Essays*, I, 256.

Once more, and on the practical side, nature and experience had gifted him with preternatural facility of luminous exposition. His books, admirably written though they are, models of philosophical interpretation, convey but faint idea of his felicity as a lecturer. I have heard many eminent teachers, but he stands first—with no second. The very artlessness of his performance rendered it the more striking. And here, I think, we must find the clue, missed by his mere readers, in the character of the man. In this respect he was a walking epitome of the best that Scots nationality can produce—and a Scot may be forgiven for saying that this is very good! The combination of serious, but light, gravity, of quaint humor, keen yet never mordant, of simplicity, sometimes almost laughable, with a mind that spent its whole time in intimate companionship of the masters of those who know, culminated in a vitalizing temperament that wrought irresistibly. Like all human beings, he had his limitations. But, in his chosen sphere, the class-room, they counted least, nay, almost disappeared; in the professorial chair, he came as near the ideal as anyone ever can. Entirely unaware of the fact, he ruled by service; and, inevitably, earned the teacher's highest praise and richest reward—he had many souls to his hire. Those of us who knew him intimately, who must remain under incalculable obligation to him to our lives' end, in taking last, poignant farewell, can only say of him, to others who knew him not—*Sic itur ad astra*; and, sharpened by fond remembrance, readopt the principle he inculcated and lived—*Sic vos non vobis*.

True master thou of those that know and hope,
Whose wise years mingled with the wine of youth,
Leader unlost, upon the upward slope,
Of souls that freely climb fresh opening truth;

Here, in still Autumn's lingering prescient pause,
Death lays in love a reconciling palm
On that broad brow, and more divinely draws
Life's veil. God's light is thine, His gracious calm.

We, half forlorn, although our spirits live
Rich heritors of all thy lips bequeath,
We, poorer now, disciples, debtors, give
Out of our poverty love's reverent wreath.

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